

Aquatic Invasive Plants and Animals

Michigan's waters are threatened by numerous nonnative aquatic invasive plants and animals already here, such as the zebra mussel, round goby, sea lamprey, Eurasian ruffe, Eurasian watermilfoil, rusty crayfish, and spiny water flea. A number of species also are knocking at the door, including several species of Asian carp coming up the Chicago diversion that could potentially enter Lake Michigan and snakehead fish that already are found in other Midwest states. These species and others are harmful to recreational fishing and do extensive economic and natural resource damage.

Anglers and boaters can help prevent the spread of fish diseases and other aquatic nuisance species by taking the following steps:

- Clean boats, trailers, and other equipment thoroughly between fishing trips to keep from transporting undesirable fish pathogens and organisms, from one water body to another with special care to clean fishing equipment when you are done fishing known locations of the fish diseases. A light bleach solution is an excellent disinfectant for cleaning your equipment.
- After cleaning allow boats, trailers, and other equipment to fully dry for 4 to 6 hours in the sun.
- Do not move fish or fish parts from one body of water to another.
- Do not release live bait into any water body.
- Handle fish as gently as possible if you intend to release them and release them as quickly as possible.
- Refrain from hauling the fish for long periods in live wells if you intend to release them.
- Report unusual numbers of dead or dying fish to Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division offices.
- Educate other anglers about the measure they can take to prevent the spread of fish diseases and other aquatic nuisance species.

Natural resource managers are concerned about introduction of new species and have set up an Angler's Monitoring Network to report any discoveries. Anglers should save and report unidentified fish to the nearest DNR Operations Service Center listed on page 31 of this booklet. If you have any questions, contact an Operations Service Center or visit www.michigan.gov/deq-anglers-monitoring-network.